Tree approach

Purpose

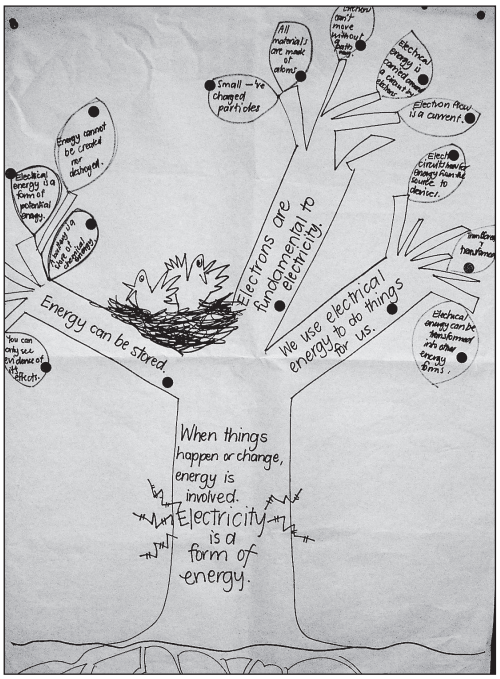
An assessment technique for analysing text and making judgements about levels of understanding.

Process

- Read through the text once and determine the major theme.
- Write this as a phrase or sentence as the main trunk of the tree.
- Determine how many sub-themes are contained in the text related to the main theme. Try to limit these to a maximum of five. Reduce these sub-themes to phrases or sentences containing key words. These are the branches.
- Examine each sub-theme and extract and summarise the detail related to that sub-theme. These are the leaves.
- Assemble the diagram showing the main theme (trunk), the sub-themes (branches) and the detail of each sub-theme (leaves).
- Use a traffic light technique (coloured, self-adhesive dots), and self-assessment to determine the level of understanding of each sub-theme and its associated detail. Green dots for 'fully understood', orange dots for 'partially understood' and red dots for 'not understood'.
- Focus on red and orange themes and study other references to strengthen understanding of the concepts. These are the roots.

Product

The product of this process is a clearly articulated analysis of extended text which identifies the concepts which need to be further studied.



Primary**Connections examples**

- Use the tree approach to analyse the teacher background information from a Primary**Connections** curriculum unit.
- Analyse the information about a chosen science concept from the Science Background CD to assess understanding.

Reference

Malouf, Doug (1988). *How to Create and Deliver a Dynamic Presentation.* Australia: Simon and Schuster.